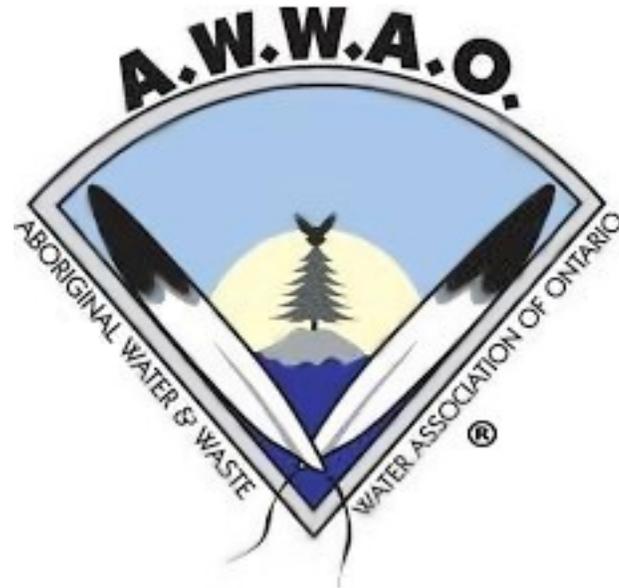


# ABORIGINAL WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO





*The meaning of the AWWAO logo as described by the artist:*

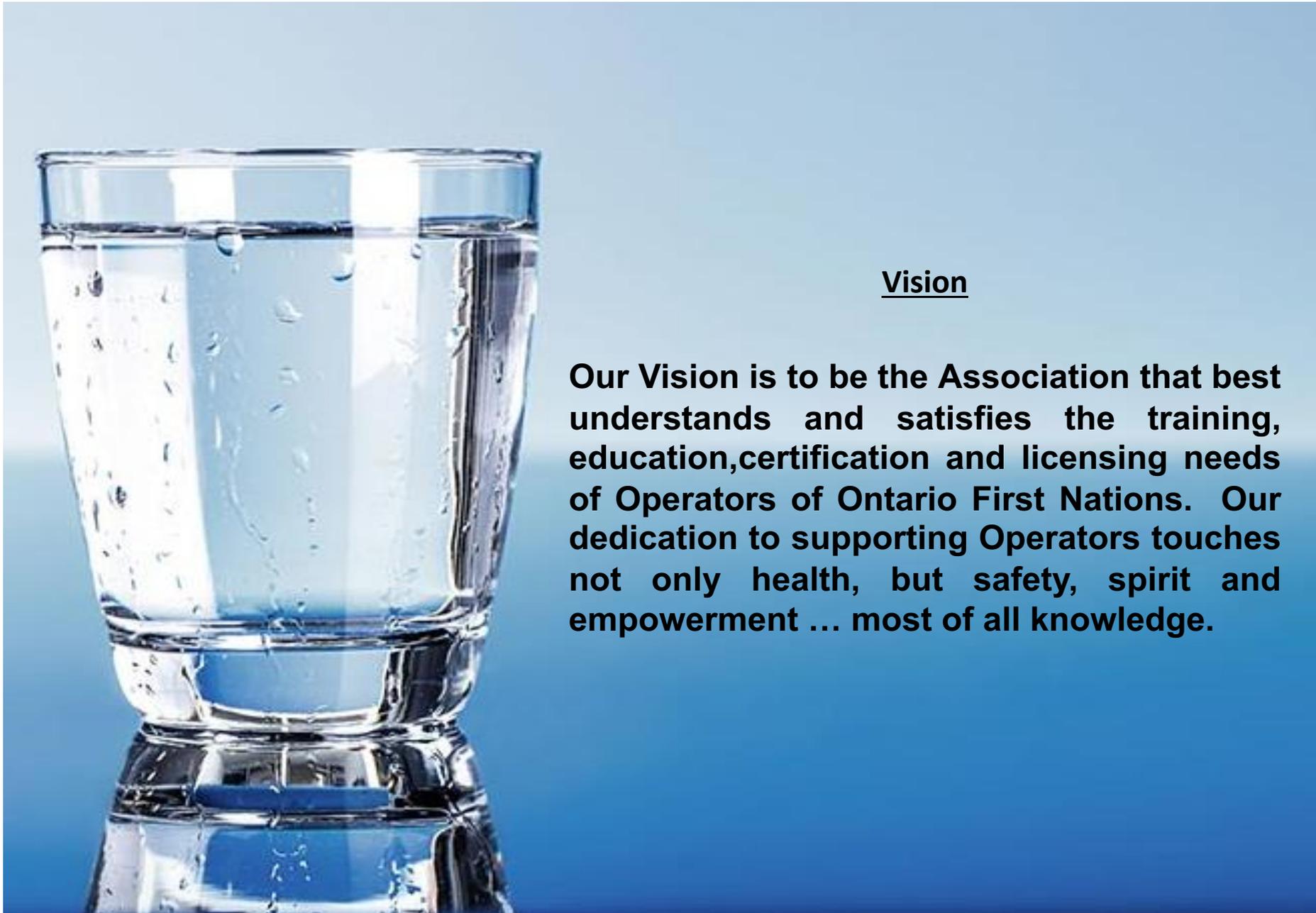
*Tree—represents Mother Earth*

*Sun—brings Life to our Environment*

*Eagle—watches over the Environment*

*Sky—ensures the Cycle of Water*





## Vision

**Our Vision is to be the Association that best understands and satisfies the training, education, certification and licensing needs of Operators of Ontario First Nations. Our dedication to supporting Operators touches not only health, but safety, spirit and empowerment ... most of all knowledge.**

## History of AWWAO

The vision of an association for plant operators was primarily envisaged in 1983-1984 in the London, Ontario area by four First Nations plant operators. Their vision was to develop a resource centre for technical information as operators assume greater control of their training requirements.

Since 1995-2018 the Association has been funded by Health Canada funding. In 2015 INAC started funding AWWAO as well. AWWAO is now funded by Indigenous Services Canada. Commencing in the fiscal year 1997-1998 the Association's support funding has been supported by Health Canada Ontario Region. This has been done with the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation which has assisted AWWAO to promote the high standards of operator certification and professionalism through newsletters, annual conferences and general sharing of information and ideas. In 2010, AWWAO retained the Ogemawahj Tribal Council to provide administrations services for the organization. In 1990, the formation of the Ogemawahj Tribal Council (OTC) started to provide superior professional and technical services to its member First Nations. Since 2013, Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) has been providing administration services for AWWAO. KO or the Northern Chiefs Council is situated in Dryden, Ontario. In February 2018 AWWAO thanked their recent host Keewaytinook Okimakanak for their term and changed their status to "stand alone." AWWAO hired their first employee, Sara Campbell.



## About Us

**The Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario's (AWWAO) goal is to attain assurance that First Nations water and wastewater treatment plant operators are confident, efficient and effective in managing the purification of the water and the treatment of wastewater in their community. The vision of the AWWAO has been built upon twenty-four years of increasing provincial and federal government recognition of the importance of training and certification of First Nations water and wastewater treatment plant operators thereby achieving the AWWAO goals and objectives. AWWAO is committed to continue preparing Ontario First Nations operators to be effective workers in a demanding workplace and to be productive community members.**

**AWWAO became a non-profit incorporated entity on April 2011. This allowed AWWAO to enter into contribution agreements with federal and provincial governments as well as to solicit private sponsorships. The Board decision to start as a non-profit incorporated entity much as its sister alliances of the Ontario Water Works Association and American Water Works Association has as its goal to become a separate entity dedicated to promoting and encouraging the aboriginal operators of Ontario.**



# ABORIGINAL WATER & WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

## ABOUT US

The Aboriginal Water & Wastewater Association of Ontario is an information source for water environment and operator training certification issues and technology. AWWAO's members include professionals from Ontario First Nations, Environmental Health Officers, Tribal Councils, Municipal Suppliers and some Government Agencies.

## GOALS

- Be updated and informed about issues that affect water treatment
- Interact with persons in various fields of water expertise
- Promote concerns of membership through collective voice
- Exchange information and ideas to other members, the public and Chiefs and Councils

[www.awwao.org](http://www.awwao.org)

## OBJECTIVES

To act as a voice and forum for First Nation Plant Operators in Ontario, publish a newsletter, promote communications and networking among Plant Operators and other persons of interest in AWWAO's objectives which promote the importance of:

- A safe and potable water supply and the highest standard of wastewater operations
- The development and delivery of continuing education and training programs for Plant Operates and others involved in water and wastewater treatment
- Technical training in maintaining and upgrading the Operators knowledge of proper water and wastewater operation and maintenance requirements
- Involving qualified Operators in the design, construction or upgrading of water and wastewater treatment plants
- Proper training, certification and licensing of Operators

## Keewaytinook Okimakanak and the Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario sign agreement

On October 12, 2016, Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario and Keewaytinook Okimakanak have entered into a formal partnership through a memorandum of understanding to address First Nations water and wastewater issues across Ontario.

A signing ceremony for the MOU was held at the Keewaytinook Centre of Excellence and witnessed by Carolyn Bennett the Minister of Crown-Indigenous relations.

Under the MOU, AWWAO will provide all operational personnel for KO's drinking water initiatives, with KO providing administrative, technical and supervisory capacity to prospective projects.



In November 2016 AWWAO applied for a trademark application with the Business development office. After the Trademark office received the application, it assigned us a filing date. The application was then reviewed by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. After a lengthy process, AWWAO proudly received the Trade-marks Certificate of Registration dated June 6, 2018.



	Innovation, Sciences et Développement économique Canada Office de la propriété intellectuelle du Canada	Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada Canadian Intellectual Property Office	
<i>Marques de commerce</i> Certificat d'enregistrement		<i>Trade-marks</i> Certificate of Registration	
<p>La présente atteste que la marque de commerce identifiée dans l'extrait ci-joint, tiré du registre des marques de commerce, a été enregistrée et que ledit extrait est une copie conforme de l'inscription de son enregistrement. Conformément aux dispositions de la <i>Loi sur les marques de commerce</i>, cette marque de commerce est renouvelable tous les quinze ans à compter de la date d'enregistrement.</p>		<p>This is to certify that the trade-mark, identified in the attached extract from the register of trade-marks, has been registered and that the said extract is a true copy of the record of its registration. In accordance with the provisions of the <i>Trade-marks Act</i>, this trade-mark is subject to renewal every 15 years from the registration date.</p>	
			
			
Número d'enregistrement Registration Number	<b>TMA998,221</b>	Date d'enregistrement Registration Date	<b>6 juin/Jun 2018</b>
Número de dossier File Number	<b>1808548</b>	 Registrar of Trade-marks	
<small>(CIPO 196) 05-16</small>			

**In March 2018, AWWAO partnered with the Ontario Water and Wastewater Certification Office and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to deliver practical certification examinations for experienced drinking water operators working in First Nation communities. AWWAO is very excited about this partnership with OWWCO and MOE to roll out this initiative, which we hope will be a benefit to First Nation Operators wishing to participate in the certification program.**

**Practical certification examinations provide an alternative path to certification for experienced operators who may have difficulty passing the written provincial certification exams. Through these examinations, operators will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in a one-on-one assessment at the facility where they work. AWWAO will be providing their first practical exam this week.**



Each year AWWAO holds a training conference. The event gathers water and wastewater professionals from across the province to participate in training courses, network with suppliers and government representatives, and celebrate achievements in protecting public health. This conference captures training courses, tradeshow vendors, presentations and interactive dialogue between the attendees. The event has been well attended with a host of lively and informative speakers taking part on the conference.

A tradition of the AWWAO event is the coveted First Nations Water Taste Challenge award that was presented at the banquet. The history of the AWWAO Water Taste Challenge cup started on November 7, 2012. The past AWWAO Treasurer and current Vice-Chair while discussing an upcoming AWWAO meeting asked of themselves how can we, “Wow” the AWWAO membership? The original idea came from an existing annual water conference from the northwest however the application of the idea was new to the AWWAO and so it came to be that the Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario’s Water Taste Challenge was spawned.



**The Water Taste Challenge presents the opportunity to showcase the AWWAO membership's expertise as Water Treatment Facility Professionals by having a dignified panel of judges taste samples of the First Nation entrant's potable water treated at their individual water treatment plants.**

**A panel of five judges is carefully selected at the AWWAO annual conference after which the panel swishes and swirls the water samples basing their judgment on the taste, clarity, appearance and overall thirst-quenching satisfaction of the treated water and yes, each judge is provided with a "spit bucket".**

**Selecting a replica of the Stanley Cup was the obvious choice for an award considering the hockey fanaticism within our First Nation's world. Ontario being the vast province that it is warranted a decision to award a Northern and a Southern cup to the water treatment plant operators within the province. The city of Sudbury being the dividing line between the North and South. The cups representing the pinnacle of safe potable water production had to be given names and not just any names.**



The AWWAO board of directors pondered long and hard about naming the cups after several deserving individuals and concluded that it made the most sense to name the cups after those who have dedicated their lives to water in some form or another. Two names stood out above all others and the only thing left to do would be to obtain permissions from the individuals and or their families to use their names on the cups thereby commemorating them for all time. Permissions were granted from both the families as well as the AWWAO board of directors and the Josephine Mandamin Northern and the Derek Kamanga Southern Water Taste Challenge Cups became a reality.

Josephine Mandamin became famous as the First nation grandmother to walk around the Great Lakes and spearhead other water walks around other sacred waters in North America. Her water walks have raised awareness for the environment, Great Lakes and water. She has become a leading advocate for First nations and people alike with these concerns. The “Mandamin Cup” will stamp her legacy.



**Derek Kamanga worked extensively with First Nations for over two decades as water and wastewater engineer for Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation. He was everywhere it seemed, working on local and national level projects. In fact, if you every saw his office with its stack of reports, memos, letters, one got a sense of the depth of the man’s passion for work. We will always remember his continual plea for “Source Water Protection.” The Kamanga Cup will forever mark his legacy for his success.**



**Further thought was given at the AWWAO board meeting (a lot of smoke filled the room, smelt like burning wood!) and it was decided that because the Stanley Cup replicas are too big, bulky and expensive, that the individual winners from the north and the south would receive a replica of the Lord Stanley bowl to take home to their communities where they can proudly display the symbol of their expertise and accomplishment.**

**Each full and take-home size Stanley Cup replica is engraved with the winning operator’s name, the community name where the water treatment facility is located and the year, they won the challenge.**



The Water Taste Challenge is scheduled to take place each year at the AWWAO Annual General Meeting and Conference. All First Nation members within the province are invited to bring one U.S. gallon of their finest potable water treated from their FN Water Treatment Facility to enter into the contest. A winner from the North region and the South region is then chosen. The winners are awarded the Water Taste Challenge Cup at the conference and are given a replica of the bowl to take home in addition to a prize.



**Also recognized at the banquet was the AWWAO Operator of the Year award. AWWAO recognizes that there are First Nation Operators in Ontario who go above and beyond doing a good job; they provide an example for others of many facets of being an Operator, particularly in supporting the other activities of other Operators. They make the extra effort to support their fellow Operators, and teach others what they have learned through many years of working in the field. Often, they encourage others to become more involved including training opportunities. They go out of their way to help everyone in the water and wastewater field. They volunteer to help others, they serve on the committees, and all while doing the things that are necessary to be considered “good at their job.” Operators are nominated and each year at the conference there are recognized at the banquet. AWWAO recognizes First Nation operators who are nominated by members of their communities as people who they trust and rely on to provide safe drinking water to their families.**

**Paul Strohack began his career with Health Canada in 1970 as an Environmental Health Officer working out of Sioux Lookout. His role was to manage Ontario’s Environmental Public Health program and operations with First Nations and Inuit Health. Under Paul’s leadership, the Environmental Public Health Unit underwent a major transformation, dealt with many environmental issues and always focused on safe, clean water for First Nations people.**

Paul was a great supporter of AWWAO and First Nation Operators since its very early years. He believed there was need for AWWAO to represent the First Nations operators across Ontario long before most people recognized the crucial role the operators play in the health and safety of their communities. He was instrumental in establishing programs such as the water testing program by Health Canada. He commended the First Nations for the handling of their health and safety issues. To honor the legacy of Mr. Paul Strohack, AWWAO has named the award “The Paul Strohack Operator of the Year Award.”



**2018/2019 Operator of the Year and Water Taste Cup Challenge recipients**

**Operator of the Year Award was given to Aaron Beaucage and Charles Friday.**

**Water Taste Cup Challenge was given to Michael Gillis from Constance Lake and Andrew Recollet from Whitefish River.**

**Congratulations!**



**In our continued quest to improve the First Nations Operator's level of certification, AWWAO also hosts a Northern and Southern exam preparation course. The course contains a four day classroom prep, followed by a fifth day Provincial Certification Exam.**



For the last four years AWWAO has implemented a tradeshow into the conference. The tradeshow showcased a variety of options for attendees and businesses to engage and interact with each other. Each year the vendors put on an excellent show for those attending the tradeshow, interactive displays and live demos were available to keep things interesting. Throughout the conference, attendees have the opportunity to network, socialize and explore challenges in the protection and treatment of our water supply. The tradeshow has been a big success and continues to grow each year.



New this year, AWWAO has created a Gary Oja Award for the Instructor of the Year. This award will be awarded at the beginning of next year in honor of Gary, who passed away suddenly in 2018. Gary was described as being a trainer who was particularly keen on training First Nation individuals across Ontario. He worked out of Dryden in the Keewatinook Centre of Excellence. Gary began his career with the MOE and OCWA retiring on August 8, 2007. During his employment he held various positions including, operator, senior operator, assistant manager, acting operations manager and acting manager in the Northwest Hub. His employment started in Atikokan followed by Ear Falls, Red Lake, Sault St Marie, North Bay and ending in Terrace Bay. Gary was well liked by all co-workers and was always willing to take on new initiatives. After retirement, he returned to Thunder Bay and during his retirement, he worked part time as a consultant and instructor in water and wastewater. Gary will be truly missed by many operators.

In conclusion the AWWAO board of directors along with the help of our funding agencies and Federal and Provincial working partners, AWWAO hopes to continue our training successes well into the future.

*Thank you*

